

*Anywhere
you wander...
Part III*

A. PER DIEM, ALLOWANCES AND ADVANCES

1. **Travel Advance** - A travel advance is made for the express purpose of providing a person authorized to travel at government expense with funds to meet the authorized travel expenses.
2. **Applying for Allowances** - If you are eligible to apply for temporary lodging, foreign transfer, home service transfer, separate maintenance, or education allowances, you should apply for them on form SF-1190 which is available at the **Travel Service Center (Room 1258, Main State) or on line: <http://arpsdir.a.state.gov>** For more information, consult your GSO at post or the Travel Service Center in Room 1258 – Main State.
3. **Per Diem** - Payment made to the traveler for each day in official travel or TDY status away from employee's permanent duty station to meet the cost of room and board. No per diem is payable for days of leave taken in conjunction with official travel.
4. **Travel Status** - For computing per diem, official travel begins at the time you leave your home, office, or other authorized point of direct departure and ends when you return to your home, office, or other authorized point at the conclusion of the trip.
5. **Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance-TQSA (DSSR 120)** - TQSA is a quarters allowance granted to you and your family for the reasonable cost of temporary quarters for a period not more than (a) three months after your arrival at a new post in a foreign area, but not longer than the date you begin to occupy permanent quarters; (b) one month immediately preceding your final departure from post abroad after the necessary vacating of permanent quarters. Rates and policy governing TQSA vary by post, and cover lodgings but not meals. You may receive an advance to cover TQSA.
6. **Foreign Transfer Allowance (FTA-Standardized Regulations 240; <http://aoprls.a.state.gov>)** - The FTA is an allowance for expenses that you incur incident to a transfer to a foreign post. It is composed of four parts:
 - a. **Lump-sum miscellaneous expense portion** - Single employees may be granted \$650 without having to itemize expenses. If the single employee itemizes, **he may claim up to the equivalent of one weeks salary**. Married employees may be granted \$1300 without having to itemize. If they do itemize, **they may claim up to the equivalent of two weeks' salary**. The salary of a GS-13/10—one week or two weeks-- is the maximum anyone may claim—even if the employee's rank is above the GS13/10. Please note that the Travel Service Center (Room 1258 MS) does not process requests for the Miscellaneous Expense allowances prior to going to post. It is now mandatory to process these allowances at post.

Allowable expenses include costs of:

- 1) disconnecting/connecting appliances or utilities;
- 2) converting appliances, including purchase of transformers;
- 3) cutting/fitting old rugs or draperies moved from old residence to new;
- 4) auto registration, driver's license, and catalytic converter removal;
- 5) utility fees or contract deposit not offset by eventual refunds.
- 6) fees associated with shipping/only shipping domestic pet as cargo.
- 7) airline charge for transporting a pet—not vet's fees, quarantine or a shipper's handling charges

- b. **Lump sum wardrobe expense portion** - Rates vary, and offset only 2-zone transfers (posts are grouped into zones based on climate).
- c. **Pre-departure subsistence expense portion** - Allowance authorized in TA to apply to lodging, meals, laundry, and dry cleaning while you and your family are in temporary quarters. This portion is allowed for up to 10 days before final PCS departure from a post in the U.S. to a post abroad. Rates used are not to exceed the maximum per diem rate for the locality from which you are transferred (employee receives total rate, other family members over 12 receive 75% of the applicable rate, and members under 12 receive 50% of the rate). You may apply for advance of funds for the FTA.
- d. **Lease Penalty Allowance**—Offsets expense of breaking a lease incurred when transfer is required by USG. Maximum reimbursement is three months rent or terms of the lease —whichever is less. This allowance is seldom awarded.

7. **Home Service Transfer Allowance (HSTA-Standardized Regulations 250; <http://aoprls.a.state.gov>)** - The HSTA is an allowance for expenses that you incur incident to your establishment at a post in the U.S. You will be obligated to sign a statement that you will serve for an additional 12 months after transfer to the U.S., or be liable for repayment of this allowance. Like the FTA described above, it is composed of four parts:

- a. **Lump sum miscellaneous expense portion** - Single employees may be granted \$650 without having to itemize expenses; or, they may be granted actual itemized amount of allowable expenditures, not to exceed one week's salary (or one week's salary of a GS-13/10, whichever is less). Employees with a family may be granted \$1300 or actual allowable expenses up to 2 weeks' salary (or 2 weeks' salary of a GS-13/10, whichever is less.)

Allowable expenses include costs of:

- 1) disconnecting/connecting appliances or utilities;
 - 2) converting appliances, including purchase of transformers;
 - 3) cutting/fitting old rugs or drapes moved from old residence to new;
 - 4) auto registration, driver's license, and catalytic converter re-
 - 5) utility fees or contract deposit not offset by eventual refunds; and
 - 6) re-installing catalytic converter or making other necessary adjustments to POV.
 - 8) only fees associated with shipping domestic pet as cargo-no related charges
- b) **Lump sum wardrobe expense portion** - Rates vary, and offset only 2-zone transfers (posts are grouped into zones based on climate).
- c) **Subsistence expense portion** - Allowance may be authorized to apply to lodging, meals, laundry, and dry cleaning while you and your family are in temporary quarters at your new US post. This portion is allowed for up to 60 days after arrival at your US post, but may be extended for an additional 60 days for compelling reasons. The standard CONUS per diem rate is used—not the local per diem. The employee receives the total daily rate, other family members over 12 receive 75% of the applicable rate, and members under 12 receive 50% of the rate. The standard CONUS rate applies only to the first 30 days; for the second 30 days, 3/4 of the CONUS rates apply. You may apply for an advance of funds for HSTA.
- d) **Lease penalty allowance** – Offsets expense of breaking a lease abroad when dwelling is personally rented and transfer is unexpectedly required by USG.

B. WHY YOU NEED AN INVENTORY

The Inventory is the document the packer gives you when your household effects are packed out, either for shipment to or from post or to storage. This document is a "statement" of what the packer has picked up from you and may describe the condition of your goods at the time of packing. The inventory will be signed by both you and the packing crew chief. It should include any fragile or high value items you are packing to ensure that the packer takes responsibility for them and is liable in case of their damage or loss. Since high-value items (those valued at over \$1,000) are included on the high-value list for the Claims Office, the value need not be specified on the inventory. (See "Why You Need Insurance for Your Effects" on page 51.)

You should have a separate inventory list for each type of packing the company performs: UAB, HHE, storage, consumables, etc.

Remember, your INVENTORY is:

- ✓ The RECORD to use when your household effects arrive at their destination. By checking items off as they enter your home, any missing items and/or items designated for storage and erroneously shipped are quickly identified;
- ✓ EVIDENCE that an item should have been placed in storage but was shipped, or vice versa. If effects that were marked for shipment are found in the storage lot, the packing company will be required to prepare them for shipment at no expense to the Government and can be assessed liquidated damages for unnecessary delay in preparing and releasing the shipment;
- ✓ The BASIS for filing a claim if there is a loss. The inventory serves again as evidence that the item existed and that the claim is legitimate. **Without a copy of the inventory, your insurance company and the Department's Claims Office will require substantial additional proof to establish that a loss has occurred.** (See "About the Claims Act" on page 51.);
- ✓ The DOCUMENT required when you request supplemental shipments from your storage. You must identify items to be removed from storage by their numbers assigned in the inventory, as well as by descriptions; and
- ✓ **THE ONLY RECORD YOU HAVE THAT YOUR HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS WERE PACKED!** A group of complete strangers has entered your home, removed your belongings and assured you that you will see your things again in the future. Without an inventory, you have no record that someone else has assumed responsibility for your effects while in transit and/or storage for their safe return. It is wise to compile a more detailed inventory for personal reference. This is helpful when removing items from storage or for determining the extent of loss if preparing a claim becomes necessary.

GET YOUR COPY OF THE INVENTORY AND CARRY IT WITH YOU!**C. FILING A CLAIM (<http://almopsttm.a.state.gov/claims.asp>)**

Remember: The CLAIMS ACT is no substitute for insurance.

The U.S. Government provides limited compensation if there is loss or damage to employees' effects, incident to their official service. The Military Personnel and Civilian Employees' Claims Act of 1964 was not designed to serve as primary insurance -- only as a backup mechanism. The Act's limitations are detailed in the Foreign Affairs Manual; this brief summary is intended merely to acquaint you with the limitations of the Act. For specific guidance on filing a claim, please consult "Personal Property Claims" on the site given above. There is a "Fast Track" form (DS1620F) for claims of less than \$1,000. 14 FAM 640/650. The "Claims Packet" prepared by the Claims Office (A/LM/OPS/TTM/CL, S/A 3-Suite 5100; 2121 Virginia Avenue by CVS) might also be helpful. Every post should have a designated Claims Investigating Officer (CIO) to assist you. If you are filing a claim while in Washington, you can also contact the Claims Office directly (see address immediately above); TEL: 202 663 0936 or 202 663 0891/92).

NOTE: Once effects are delivered, you have 75 days to notify the Department of your intent-to-file a claim.

- ☞ **THE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDS THAT EMPLOYEES OBTAIN FULL PRIVATE COMMERCIAL INSURANCE COVERING LOSS AND DAMAGE FOR THEIR EFFECTS AND AUTOMOBILES.**

The **maximum** amount payable under the Claims Act is \$40,000 (\$100,000 for evacuations). However, there are restrictive per-item limits under the Claims Act and **reimbursement is not made for replacement value of an item, only for depreciated value in most cases.**

The Act authorizes payment for personal property only. It does not provide compensation for loss of real estate nor for such types of expenses as: loss of use, interest, carrying charges, cost of lodging or food while awaiting arrival of shipments, attorney fees, telephone calls, car rentals, inconvenience, or cost of insurance premiums.

The Act does not provide coverage for items you are wearing or carrying at the time of the loss or damage (e.g., watches, rings, wallets, etc.) nor while you are traveling without government orders—on vacation for example

The Claims Act does not provide coverage for theft of your cash, either while in transit or in storage.

Every employee has the legal right to file a claim against the Department under this Act. **You must notify the Department within 75 days of your intent-to-file a claim and the entire claim must be filed within two years from the date of delivery, or in the case of theft from quarters, two years from the date of the theft.. Please note that it is to your advantage, however, to file your claim within ONE YEAR of delivery or loss through theft from Government quarters.** Sometimes, advance payment may be authorized up to 75% of the value of the loss if specifically requested; however, a claim must first be submitted and reviewed for appropriateness and valuation.

To simplify the Claims process, there is also a “Fast Track” process for claims under \$1,000 which uses DS 1620F. This is available through the site given above.

D. WHY YOU NEED PERSONAL COMMERCIAL (PRIVATE) INSURANCE FOR YOUR EFFECTS

Because you are transferring under government orders, your possessions are partially covered by the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees' Claims Act. This law provides for reimbursement of loss or damage to your shipments, up to \$40,000 (\$100,000 for evacuations).

The Department's contractors also assume some responsibility for your goods. The packing company is liable for loss and/or damage, however caused, to any article that it has packed while in its control or custody. **If you elect to pack any items yourself, the packing company will assume no liability whatsoever for damage to those items. Only private insurance will cover goods which are packed by the employee. Please note that many carriers will not accept cartons packed by the employee. Occasionally, they will agree to inspect what you have packed and then tape it up themselves.**

Contract packers have a maximum liability above which they will not settle. This maximum liability is currently \$8.50/lb. Thus, a 5,000-pound storage lot would have a maximum value of \$42,500. This does not mean that you would receive this amount were your lot to be damaged or lost; it simply means that \$42,500 would be the maximum amount for which the contractor would be liable. Payment is also made on the depreciated value.

 You should have private commercial insurance on your effects for the following reasons:

- ✓ The claims program pays replacement cost minus depreciation in most cases. Thus, any item lost will be reimbursed at less than replacement cost;
- ✓ The claims program recognizes that some few items appreciate. However, for the most part, items are depreciated and the employee would not recoup the current value.
- ✓ There are limits on the amount of reimbursement for certain items, such as expensive hobby equipment, jewelry, furs. Any value over these limits will have to be provided by commercial insurance; and
- ✓ Private insurance will enable you to cover the cost of replacement should you sustain a loss.

NOTE: Any private insurance you obtain should be for the **full** value of your effects. If you insure for less than 100%, the insurance company will pay only the percentage of your claim specified in your policy. You should also note that most insurance does not cover reimbursement for breakage, rubbing and marring. It only reimburses in the event of outright loss. **Before your goods are moved, be sure to determine whether your policy covers both loss and "breakage, rubbing and marring" or only loss. You also need to determine if you want to pay a bit extra to include a "replacement value" clause.**

If there is a loss, you must first file a claim with your private insurance (if you have it) and then with the Department Claims Act. The Administrator of the Claims Act can offer guidance on filing claims against a moving or storage company. You do not have to file with all the carriers and packing companies

that were involved in your move. The Department can pay your claim before the claim is settled by the various transportation companies. The Administrator of the Claims Program will pursue your claim with the individual transportation company(ies) responsible for the loss or damage.

WHERE TO GO FOR INFORMATION: The Overseas Briefing Center (a part of the Transition Center) at the Foreign Service Institute has valuable information on insurance companies.(See pages 65-66 of "It's Your Move" as well.)

E. HOW TO MAKE MORE THAN ONE SHIPMENT

- ☞ Your transfer orders are valid for one year from the date you arrive at post. As long as you have weight allowance left, you may request a supplemental shipment from your HHE allowance or consumables allowance. No supplemental air freight shipment is authorized, however. Keep in mind when shipping effects, that the total amount shipped, combined with the total amount in storage, cannot exceed the net weight allowance of 18,000 pounds. A further constraint may be determined by the type of housing at post, and whether or not there is space for additional items.

If, after arriving at post, you choose additional shipments, you must notify Transportation by e-mail, fax letter or phone explaining, in detail, what items are to be shipped. Transportation will then issue the necessary authorizations for the packer to remove the items from your storage or to pick up the items you have requested.

If you are having your items picked up from a residence or vendor, you must designate your own agent (a friend or family member) who will turn your effects over to the packer for shipment. **YOUR DESIGNATED AGENT WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SCHEDULING THE PICKUP WITH TRANSPORTATION.**

If you request any part of your storage lot, give the inventory numbers and full descriptions of the requested items. Provide as much information as possible to ensure that you receive exactly what you want.

- ☞ NOTE: A storage company is not authorized to open individual cartons to find a particular item. If you need a specific book or kitchen utensil, you must ship the entire carton that contains the item. There would simply be too much risk of loss or pilferage if cartons were allowed to be opened.

The Government will not pay storage on lots of less than 200 pounds. You should keep track of how much storage you have remaining after making supplemental shipments. **By the same token, you may not ship less than 200 pounds at the time.**

You may make more than one shipment, if you need to, but keep in mind that the cost of making several partial shipments is higher than the cost of making one entire shipment. The more separate shipments are handled (packed, put into storage, taken out of storage, re-loaded onto outgoing transportation), the more charges accrue. Please try to keep the number of shipments you make to a minimum. **Requests for more than two supplemental shipments** or multiple requests for pick-ups of HHE from locations other than the residence will be decided by the Chief of the Transportation Division (A/LM/OPS/TTM/TO).

F. SHIPMENTS TO OR FROM A POINT THAT IS NOT ON YOUR ORDERS OR COST-CONSTRUCTIVE SHIPMENTS

Your TA explicitly states the point(s) where shipments can originate and terminate at government expense. ***Any other starting or ending points for your shipments will involve cost-construction.*** This means that the Government will pay the cost of moving your shipment between the points named in your TA, but if there are any extra costs because you select a different origin or destination, you will pay the additional charges.

Cost-constructive shipments must either begin at the authorized origin **or** terminate at the authorized destination; shipping between two points, neither of which is your official origin nor destination, is not authorized even on a cost-construct basis.



An employee has the option to ship his/her vehicle to an alternate destination on a cost constructive basis in lieu of shipment to his or her onward assignment abroad. (14 FAM 615.1; <http://arpsdir.a.state.gov>)

For a cost-construct shipment, first the cost of moving the gross weight of your household effects between authorized points is calculated, and then the cost of moving your effects between the alternate points you designate is calculated. If the cost of the latter exceeds the cost of the former, you will pay the difference. If the cost calculation shows that the change in shipping points does not result in any extra cost, or even that the cost is less, the Government, not you, will receive any resulting financial benefit.

For example, suppose you are transferred from Paris to Bangkok but you wish to ship 1,000 pounds of household effects from San Francisco to Bangkok. If the cost of shipping 1,000 pounds of household effects from Paris to Bangkok is \$3,000 and the cost of shipping the same weight from San Francisco to Bangkok is \$4,000 you will have to pay the \$1000 in excess charges. If the cost of shipping 1,000 pounds from Paris to Bangkok is \$4,000.00 and the cost from San Francisco to Bangkok is \$3,000, you will not have to pay any freight charges.

Cost-construction also applies when you are splitting your HHE shipment between your new post and another destination. For example, suppose again you are going from Paris to Bangkok, and you are also shipping a portion of your effects from

Paris to Boston for use by a child in college. As long as you are within your allowance and the 12-month limitation for the TA, the same cost comparisons would be made; only in this case, Paris to Boston would be compared with the authorized route Paris to Bangkok.

G. TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION IN CONNECTION WITH AN SMA GRANT (SEPARATE MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE GRANT)

1. **Types of SMA Grants** - Involuntary SMA (ISMA) may be granted by the Government to help you maintain your family at a separate location away from post, when conditions at a foreign post are deemed to be unhealthy or dangerous. Voluntary SMA (VSMA) may be authorized upon your request when there are special personal needs or hardships that make you wish to maintain your family elsewhere. See your Human Resources Technician in Washington or your Human Resources Officer at post, for assistance in determining if your family is eligible for an SMA grant of either type. Ultimately, the employee's bureau needs to approve the ISMA or VSMA and SMA orders have to be written for the family.
2. **U.S. Origin Point** - When your international assignment originates in the U.S. (example - New York City to Riyadh), your family members going on SMA may remain at the last official duty point, or travel to Washington, D.C. if you are authorized consultations in Washington on the way to post. Travel to home leave point would be on a cost-construct basis, compared to New York to Washington. If your family chooses to travel to Washington, household effects may be shipped to Washington and/or put into permanent storage at the designated point. UAB is authorized against any SMA travel authorization. (14 FAM 613.3-1; <http://arpsdir.a.state.gov>) Shipment of a POV to Washington is not authorized. Temporary storage of effects sent to Washington is allowed for up to 90 days. Subsequent travel authorizations will provide for relocation from either the origin point or Washington as applicable.
3. **Transfer Between Foreign Locations** - When an international assignment originates abroad, family members going on SMA may be authorized to travel and transport household effects and UAB (see above) to Washington, D.C. or other authorized location. If home leave is authorized with the transfer, family members may travel to an SMA point via the home leave location, or remain on SMA at home leave point. Effects in storage (wherever located) may be moved to the SMA point or kept in storage at your discretion, subject to authorized weight restrictions.

If your family is located abroad and elects an SMA point abroad, they may ship effects and travel at government expense on a cost-construct basis, as compared with the cost of shipping the effects to Washington, D.C. or your authorized SMA location. Any additional costs must be borne by you. It should be noted that subsequent travel authorizations will be based on travel from the authorized SMA location or Washington. If you are reassigned to Washington, for example, your family would get little, if anything, in the way of travel allowances.

4. Shipping Privately-Owned Vehicles to Involuntary SMA Location –

14 FAM 615.1 now includes authority to ship a POV from the losing post to the authorized ISMA location in the US (or on a cost-construct basis to an authorized ISMA location outside the US) or into storage when an employee receives ISMA payments for his EFM's.

NOTE: UAB is always authorized for travel against the Separate Maintenance Allowance (14FAM 613.3-1--see above). HHE shipments from post to dependents on (I)SMA are made based on employee's next set of orders and are limited by employee's authorized weight allowances. If employee's assignment is to a limited shipment post, 7,200 pounds will be split between shipment to SMA location and shipment to employee's new post.

H. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CAR SHIPMENTS

Question: My car was wrecked and I cannot get spare parts; may I ship it back to the States instead of shipping it to my next post? If I don't ship it out of the country I have to pay duty on it. (I'll not ship it to my next post.)

Answer: Yes. According to 14 FAM 615.1; <http://arpsdir.a.state.gov>, you may ship your POV back to the US on a cost-constructive basis in lieu of shipment of a POV to your next post

Question: I'm shipping my new car to my new post. I have many spare parts. Can I ship them in the trunk of the car?

Answer: The parts may be shipped as part of your household effects. Do not attempt to ship them in the trunk of the car.

Question: I was authorized to ship my US-purchased, foreign-made car from the U.S. to my post; may I replace it at post with a foreign-purchased, foreign-made car and ship it back to the US?

Answer: Yes you may ship the car back to the U.S. You should consult with your GSO to be sure that the host country will permit a replacement vehicle. And if you wish to bring the car back to the US, you must be sure that it meets safety and emission standards.

Question: My POV is only a year old. I'm being transferred overseas and want to take it. It's a van-conversion (Starcraft). Are there any restrictions?

Answer: The Government will pay to ship a vehicle of gross size not exceeding 15 measurement tons (600 cubic feet); one measurement ton equals 2,000 pounds or 40 cubic feet. The employee must pay costs in excess of this size. Also, check the Post Report for import restrictions.

Question: If I didn't ship a car to post may I ship one back to the U.S.?

Answer: Yes, if you are being assigned to the U.S. and you're a Foreign Service employee. A civil service employee may not.

Question: I'm going overseas on transfer. My family is remaining here in the U.S. on separate maintenance allowance. Can I still ship a car?

Answer: Yes.

Question: When I transfer from Washington to Prague, may I ship a car from Germany instead? It's cheaper.

Answer: Yes, if you can find a dealer who will allow you to pay for the car and take title before the car is shipped. Only if ownership by the employee **before shipment** is clearly established, may the car be shipped. If, however, you ordered the car through a dealer in Prague, and never took title or obtained other proof of ownership before shipment, all costs associated with shipment must be borne by you. Another alternative would be to pick up a car at a factory that is on a direct route to your post, and then drive it yourself to post (this would be travel by mixed-modes). Obviously, this only works when there is a reasonable distance between factory and your new post.

Question: After two years at this post, I'm being transferred to a post in the Middle East. My two year-old car is a Ford. My new post is one of the Ford boycott countries. What should I do?

Answer: You should request authority for emergency storage, and shipment of another POV will be authorized. Remember that the storage authority will end with your departure from the boycotting country.

Question: My place of appointment was outside Washington, D.C. I was sent to Washington for nine months' training, and purchased a car while I was there. My orders authorize shipment of effects from my place of appointment and from Washington, but says "from place of origin" for shipping the car. Does that mean if I buy a car in Washington while here for nine months I can't ship it from Washington? Even if my orders authorize **effects** from Washington and the regulations say shipment of effects shall constitute shipment of a car?

Answer: The car can be shipped from Washington on a cost-constructive basis, compared to shipment to post from your place of hire. A privately-owned vehicle is not included in the definition of effects, although spare parts **are**.

Question: My car meets American emission standards. It's two years old and has served me well at this post. Now I'm being transferred, and my new post of

assignment has more restrictive standards that my car can't meet. What should I do?

Answer: If the local Government will not authorize importation of the car, the POV will be authorized for emergency storage. Shipment of another car that meets local requirements will be simultaneously authorized. You must request emergency storage from HR/EX/ASUD.

Question: I plan to sell my car at post. On the way from my post to the U.S. I want to stop and buy a car. May I ship it from the purchase place? It'll be cheaper.

Answer: Yes you may. You would have to ship the car on a cost-constructive basis. Hopefully, you could enlist the assistance of the GSO at the embassy/consulate which is nearest to the purchase location. You would also have to present a copy of your travel orders that indicate that you are entitled to ship a car from your post back to the United States. If you were on post-to-post transfer, you could also ship the car which you had just purchased to the gaining post.

Question: I just love my little car that doesn't meet American standards. I'm being assigned to Washington where I only plan to remain for two years and then get overseas again. Can I store my car abroad for two years and then have it shipped to my new post?

Answer: You can store abroad at your own expense. You must check the laws and regulations of the country where the car is stored to ensure that the car can remain there and be shipped later when you have no status in that country. Subsequent shipment to your next assignment will be on a cost-constructive basis, compared to shipment from Washington to your new post.

Question: Are there limitations on the size of POV the USG will ship at its expense?

Answer: Yes: According to 14 FAM 615.8, POVs may not exceed 15 measurement tons (16.8 cubic meters/600 cubic feet.) Shipping any POV—such as a Ford Expedition—which exceeds these specifications will result in a cost to the employee.

Question: When I got to post I found I couldn't import my car. May I ship it to the U.S. for emergency storage? May I buy another to replace it and have it shipped from place of purchase to post?

Answer: Prior to transfer, employees are responsible for checking Post Reports to determine what POVs are permitted. If the car has **already** arrived at post and permission is now being sought to store in the U.S., the car can be returned and stored only at the employee's expense. If the POV has not yet been shipped from the previous post, you could sell your car. Only if restrictions of the country of onward assignment **prevent** your car's importation will the Government pay for shipment to emergency storage. You may then purchase another POV that meets the regulations of the country of onward assignment, and the U.S. Government will ship it cost constructively to your new post. When this assignment is over, the U.S. Government will stop paying emergency storage and will move only one of the cars to the next post. The employee is responsible for disposing of the other car.

Question: I was posted to Manila, and I ordered a car from Japan before leaving post. However, it didn't arrive until after I left. Can it be shipped to my next post (provided it is not the U.S.)?

Answer: Yes, but only if you have title to the car before its shipment.

Question: I'm due for a replacement vehicle. I'm transferring from Tokyo to Panama and would like to ship my current vehicle as far as San Francisco, use it on home leave, and then have the replacement vehicle shipped from Miami to Panama. May I do this?

Answer: No. Only one vehicle may be shipped on a given set of orders (exceptions include cases of authorized emergency storage). Accepting the vehicle in San Francisco would constitute the completion of the shipment.

Question: I understand that bringing a foreign car into conformity with US specifications can be very expensive. Where can I obtain more information on this?

Answer: There is no central data base. You can obtain a letter from the manufacturer of a foreign car stating that it meets US specifications. You can also check the VIN number on "CARFAX." If it is included in their data base, it's fairly safe to say that it meets US "specs."